

'System affects poorer students'

POOR teenagers are being put at a disadvantage by the current university application system, which relies heavily on predicted grades and personal statements, it has been suggested.

Bright teenagers from poor backgrounds are more likely to be predicted A-level grades lower than they actually achieve, according to a study published by the Sutton Trust.

This means that they can end up applying for degree courses with lower entry requirements than they are capable of getting.

At the same time, disadvantaged students are less likely to get help in preparing their personal statements, and to be able to provide many examples of their work and life experiences, it says.

The study, by Dr Gill Wyness of the UCL Institute of Education, calls for a major overhaul of the system.

It says that official figures show that in 2016, the most advantaged university applicants were about six times more likely to go to a "high tariff" institution – those with the highest entry requirements – compared with the most disadvantaged.

Sutton Trust chairman Sir Peter Lampl, said: "Access to leading universities has improved and they are working hard to attract a wider applicant pool.

"However, the brightest disadvantaged students, given their grades, are under-represented at leading universities."